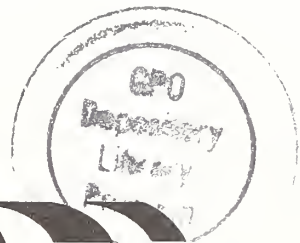


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Farm Broadcasters Letter

United States Department of Agriculture

Office of Communications

Washington, DC 20250-1340

[i.e. 2659]
Letter No. 2759

April 22, 1994

GATT SIGNED -- Trade negotiations among 117 nations on the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) ended with the signing of the multi-thousand page document in Marrakech, Morocco, April 15. U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Mike Espy, who attended the signing ceremony said, "...we have a really good deal for U.S. agriculture, one that will improve farmer income and open new markets all over the world. Agriculture-related employment is expected to increase as much as 190,000 jobs by the year 2005." Espy predicts that GATT will have a major impact on income throughout rural America. **Contact: Tom Amontree (202) 720-4623.**

FARMLAND TAXES -- Two-thirds of the tax revenue raised by local government is from the tax on real property. A USDA report, "Taxing Farmland in the United States," shows that owners with farmland holdings valued at \$5 million or more paid 47 cents per \$100 of market value, whereas owners of holdings valued at less than \$70,000 paid \$1.45 per \$100 of value. Taxes per acre follow the same pattern, higher valued holdings of farmland pay lower taxes per \$100 than lesser valued holdings. The report mentions a plausible explanation for the relatively light taxation of large landholdings, a systematic overappraisal of low-valued properties and underappraisal of high-valued properties. **Contact: Gene Wunderlich (202) 219-0425.**

ENHANCING NATURE'S DEFENSE -- Supercharged white blood cells, known as neutrophils, may soon be deployed to fight mastitis, a disease of cows' udders. Mastitis costs U.S. dairy producers \$2 billion annually in lost production and treatment. Neutrophils are part of a cow's natural first line of defense. They fight infection by surrounding and killing the invaders with a burst of hydrogen peroxide. In laboratory tests neutrophils treated with monoclonal antibodies produced 10 times as much hydrogen peroxide and became active in finding and killing bacteria. If the boosted neutrophils are as aggressive in cows as in a test tube they may replace antibiotics as a treatment for mastitis. **Contact: Max Paape (301) 504-8302.**

E.COLI -- Studies show that each year about 15,000 people become ill, and 300 die, from symptoms caused by the bacteria E.coli O157:H7. USDA's Economic Research Service estimates the medical costs and productivity losses can reach \$580 million annually. E.coli O157:H7 is the fourth most costly foodborne disease. The other three are Salmonella, Campylobacter, and Toxoplasma gondii. The H7 variety of infection can be severe to the very young or very old, those with weak immune systems, causing kidney failure or death. Most cases involve bloody diarrhea lasting about one week. USDA plans to overhaul meat and poultry inspection systems and replace them with a more scientifically based system to intercept the bacteria. The H7 variety can also be ingested from unpasteurized milk, unpasteurized apple cider, water, raw potatoes, turkey roll, and mayonnaise. **Contact: Suzanne Marks (202) 219-0864.**

SLOW GROWTH -- While the U.S. population grew by nearly 10 percent during the 1980's, nonmetro population increased by only 4 percent. Nonmetro areas had a population of 57 million people in 1990. The decreasing ability of nonmetro areas to retain and attract residents resulted in the slower population growth. The slowdown was most evident in more rural areas. Despite continued suburbanization of population and economic activity, nonmetro areas did not benefit from "metro spillover" as much as in the 1970's. **Contact: John Cromartie (202) 219-0534.**

PESTICIDE RESIDUE SUMMARY -- Produce samples at terminal markets and distribution centers are tested for pesticide residues under USDA's Pesticide Data Program. The information obtained is used by the Environmental Protection Agency for dietary risk assessments and re-registration of pesticides. Samples are gathered in proportion to population and distribution of represented products. Residue sampling was recently conducted on 5,750 samples of 12 fruit and vegetable commodities in accordance with EPA's laboratory guidelines. Generally, detected pesticides were well below EPA-established tolerances. **Contact: William Franks (202) 720-5231.**

USING THE NATURAL APPROACH -- Goatgrass is an expensive weed. It has infested more than 5 million acres of winter wheat in the U.S., reducing wheat yields and causing losses totaling more than \$145 annually. USDA scientists have found three strains of bacteria that colonize on goatgrass roots. Laboratory and field tests show that the microorganisms reduce the weed's growth, up to 40 percent, without harming wheat plants. Ongoing tests are revealing other promising soil bacteria and the best strategies for applying them. **Contact: (509) 335-1554.**

ONE MORE TIME -- This spring flowering plants will enter into a struggle with fungus and mildew. Raindrops falling on leaves can spread diseases. However, if the fungus spores can't adhere to a leaf, germinate and penetrate cells, they can't cause infection. USDA research plant pathologist James Locke has found that a spray of one-percent neem oil in water acts as a raincoat for plants against spores of fungi spread by rain and wind. The oil is extracted from seeds of the neem tree, native to India. The spray gives 95 to 100 percent protection against powdery mildew to lilacs, phlox and hydrangeas. On plants where mildew had developed the infection was arrested. **Contact: James Locke (301) 504-6413.**

PROTECTION AGAINST DIABETES -- Certain families are more prone to adult-onset diabetes than are others, but development of the disease is not inevitable. Changes in life-style can reduce the risk. One of the most effective changes is exercise. Exercise helps the body to make better use of insulin, the hormone that controls blood sugar levels. A second benefit of exercise is weight control. Fat around the waist keeps insulin from working well. Soluable fiber also helps control blood sugar. Oats and many fruits and vegetables are high in soluable fiber. Fiber also is filling, making people feel full so that they eat less. People can lose their "spare tire" by eating less fat and cholesterol, eating five fruits and vegetables a day, and being more active. Yearly check-ups can ensure that diabetes will be found early and treated promptly to prevent diabetic complications. **Contact: Connie Crawley (706) 542-8860.**

FROM OUR RADIO SERVICE

WEEKLY CASSETTE:

AGRICULTURE USA #1924 -- Farmers in the land "down under" are going through many of the changes that U.S. farmers are confronting. **Brenda Curtis** talks with an Australian radio reporter about Australian farm issues. (Weekly reel -- 13-1/2 minute documentary.)

CONSUMER TIME #1406 -- Making it from milkweed; repelling termites; the low fat diets; eating healthy on a lean budget; Salmonella test. (Weekly reel of 2-1/2 to 3 minute consumer features.)

AGRITAPE FEATURES #1916 -- A Japanese trade war?; shorter version of the "Japanese trade war?" story; kenaf-strategic fiber; women's issues "down under"; a milkweed miracle; farm workers update. (Weekly reel of features.)

USDA RADIO NEWSLINE:

Monday, May 2, world horticultural trade; Tuesday, May 3, weekly weather and crop update; Friday, May 6, dairy products report. These are the **USDA reports we know about in advance**. Our Newsline carries many stories every day which are not listed in this lineup. Please don't let the lack of a story listing keep you from calling.

USDA RADIO NEWSLINE (202) 488-8358 or 8359

COMREX ENCODED (202) 720-2545

Material changed at 5 p.m., EDT, each working day.

FROM OUR TELEVISION SERVICE

FEATURES -- **Patrick O'Leary** reports on government agencies teaming up to tackle environmental projects, and on USDA efforts in the area of organic standards certification.

ACTUALITIES -- **Jim Lyons**, USDA assistant secretary for Natural Resources & Environment, on environmental issues; USDA organic standards coordinator **Hal Ricker** on organic and sustainable agriculture; USDA chief meteorologist **Norton Strommen** on the crop and weather update.

UPCOMING FEATURES -- **Patrick O'Leary** reports on the search for vitamin A in the body, and on new products from cotton and the desert shrub guayule; **Lynn Wyvill** reports on meat and poultry safe handling labels.

Available on Satellite Galaxy 4, channel 23, audio 6.2 or 6.8, downlink frequency 4160 MHz.: Thursdays from 7:30 - 7:45 p.m., EDT; Saturdays 10:00 a.m., EDT; Mondays 8:00 a.m., EDT.

OFFMIKE

CHOMPING AT THE BIT...is the way **Jack McConnell** (KMMJ, Grand Island, NE) described producers waiting to get into the fields. Soil temperatures were rising at about the same pace as a watched pot. Jack notes that the weather this time of year is variable. A recent storm dumped heavy rain and ten inches of snow, downing power lines and closing schools.

AGRICULTURE...got a boost on the FOX network during National Agriculture Week. **Ed Slusarczyk** and **Jeff Stewart** (Ag Radio Network, Utica, NY) produced the Northeast segment of the Salute To Agriculture program, a project of NAMA. Ed and Jeff took viewers to the dairy farm of Ed's neighbor and reviewed operations. The farm supports three families.

NEW VOICE...on the station, but an experienced broadcaster, says **Mike Hergert** (KKXL, Grand Forks, ND). **Gary Weber** joins the staff as farm editor. In broadcasting since 1963, Gary was formerly general manager at KDRQ, Wishek, MN.

Farm Broadcasters Letter



Office of Communications
Room 528A
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Washington, D.C. 20250-1340

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ITS DRY...says **Ken Lane** (KVRP, Haskell, TX). Producers are forced to sell cattle and can't get milo in the ground. The window for early milo extends to May 1, if rains arrive, and late milo can go in until July. A boll weevil eradication program is underway in Ken's region. Numbers have been building. Land planted to cotton has been held down by participation in the acreage diversion program.

ITS WET...and the forecast calls for more rain, says **Doug Erdman** (WTCH, Shewano, WI). Doug says producers in his area have a positive attitude toward developments this year.

THE NETWORK...is now using DTN for distribution of programming to affiliates, says **Bob Hoff** (Northwest Ag News Network, Seattle, WA). Bob says environment and endangered species are two major items on the minds of producers in his area. Barging grain down the Snake and Columbia rivers is being threatened by dry conditions and concerns other than those of grain and cattle producers.

VIC POWELL

Office of Communications